

Commission of Conservation CANADA

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CONSERVATION is published monthly. Its object is the dissemination of information relative to the natural resources of Canada, their development and proper conservation, and the publication of timely articles on housing and townplanning.

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Conservation the Duty of the State

Not Necessarily the Business of the Individual to be Concerned about the Future

Prof. John Braeken, President of Manitoba Agricultural College, introduced his address at the Conference of Soil Fibre and Soil Fertility, under the auspices of the Commission of Conservation, at Winnipeg, as follows:—

"I was pleased to hear the Deputy Head of the Commission of Conservation make a statement to the effect that the function of the Commission was not to develop our resources at the expense of the future, nor to retard present development for the sake of the future, but rather to develop our resources to the utmost without wasting them.

"That is a motto that many of our public institutions might adopt. There are no resources that lend themselves to development and conservation at the same time to the same extent as our agricultural resources; and while this is a function of the Commission, I think it well to emphasize the fact that, if left to individual initiative, the problem of development and the problem of conservation tend to dissociate themselves. A farmer on the Portage plains or in the Qu'Appelle valley, or in the Moose Jaw district, finds it profitable, under favourable conditions, to grow wheat. As an individual he finds it returns him an immediate profit, but there is no getting away from the fact that he is growing that wheat at the expense of the soil—that, while he individually may make a profit, the state is the loser. In other words, in the way that our society is organized at the present time it is not necessarily the business of the individual to be concerned about the future of the state; it is rather the business of the state to conserve its own future. Hence we realize the great need for encouraging such organizations as that holding this conference to-day."

Did Not Expect It Would Spread

The Provincial Forester of New Brunswick, Mr. G. H. Prince, in his report on forest fires during 1919, makes special reference to the losses caused by settlers' clear-

ing fires and camp fires. In 36 cases, action was taken against parties for violation of the fire laws. The officials of the Forest Branch made it clear to the offenders that they did not wish to deal harshly with them but that the fire laws must be observed, in the interests of themselves, their neighbours and the timber owners. The presiding justice severely reprimanded the offenders, pointing out the danger of neglecting slash fires, in which many of the delinquents had lost their homes. None of the defendants pleaded ignorance of the slash-burning law, but each claimed he did not expect his little fire to spread so rapidly. The losses due to these small beginnings exceeded \$100,000.

What Constitutes a Load of Wood?

Standardization of Delivery Boxes would Promote Confidence and Enlarge Market for this Fuel

The fact that, on cut-over lands, hardwoods are becoming the preponderating species and that a very limited market exists for this timber demonstrates the desirability of the greater use of hardwood for fuel. The coal shortage could be largely offset by using the fuel which our forests provide.

One drawback to the more extensive use of hardwood for fuel has been the method of marketing. Prices are quoted per load, and a load may consist of any quantity, depending upon the dealer. Naturally the public is reluctant to purchase an unknown quantity.

The experience of one consumer with what is known as "millwood" emphasizes this point. The dealer refused to sell it by the cord but quoted it at \$3.00 per load. Measurement of the load disclosed the fact that \$3.00 per load was equivalent to \$28 per cord. On the basis of heat values, this was equivalent to \$56.00 per ton of anthracite. This class of wood was later sold by the municipality at \$7.50 per cord, and hardwood (one cord equal to one ton of anthracite) at \$13.50.

One Canadian city has standardized the size of wood delivery wagon boxes. A by-law provides that the capacity of a "double load" box must be 168 cubic feet, which is considered to be equal to one cord of wood as ordinarily thrown in. The box for a "single load" must have a capacity of 84 cubic feet. The by-law also requires that the driver of the wood delivery wagon shall before unloading invite inspection of the load by the purchaser or his representative.

This regulation might well be adopted by all municipalities; it would undoubtedly enlarge the market for wood fuel, as the consumer would no longer be compelled to purchase a load without knowing what quantity he was getting.

Alberta's Tar Sands

Probability of Successful Extraction Process Emphasizes their Importance

A recent Dominion order in council provides for the withdrawal from sale, lease or settlement of approximately 55,000 acres of land along the Athabaska river, this area embracing the well-known bituminous sands, commonly known as tar-sands. Dr. H. M. Tory, president of Alberta University, and a member of the Commission of Conservation, addressing the Calgary Board of Trade recently, stated that a noted scientist is engaged upon experiments looking to the successful extraction of bituminous and other hydrocarbons from the tar-sands, and he expected the problem would be solved within six months.

The tar-sands contain only 18.5 per cent of bitumen; and to be commercially successful, costs must be reduced to a minimum. Should the process be successful commercially, a large and rapidly expanding market is available, and a new Canadian industry would be developed for the utilization of this natural resource. Distance from the market will undoubtedly prove a handicap, but the opening up of the country will eventually secure to the district additional shipping facilities.

Waste Paper Buys Sporting Equipment

Children Take Keen Interest in Collecting When Returns Used for Athletic Purposes

The number of inquiries reaching the Commission of Conservation indicates an increasing interest in the saving of waste paper. Schools are taking up the work, and in some cities, a friendly rivalry among the school children has resulted in a much larger quantity being secured.

The schools of Vancouver, B.C., have taken the work up with energy, and, during last season, sold over 60 tons. Great interest is taken by the children in this method of obtaining school funds, and the school teachers agree that the work teaches them thrift. The pupils also compete individually in collecting, but all money earned is pooled in the interest of the school. Baseball, basketball, cricket and other athletic equipment is purchased for the use of the pupils, and the possession of these outfits tends to promote inter-school competitions. School skating rinks can also be supported by these earnings.

Apart altogether from the financial returns, the work is one that is of national importance. The demand upon the forests for pulp-wood is enormous, and while the utilization of mixed waste paper for the manufacture of newsprint is not yet commercially feasible, it is being generally used in making building and roofing papers, box-board, etc.

Unfortunately, in some portions of Canada, distance from a market renders the collection and sale of waste paper unprofitable, but this condition is rapidly being overcome by the higher prices being paid for the material. The Commission of Conservation will supply the names of dealers in waste paper and of paper mills utilizing waste paper to those desiring to undertake its collection.

Future Canadians Will Condemn Us

Natural Resources Not Alone for Present Generation—Waste Will Merit Censure

"Any person studying the political and constitutional history of Canada sees arising out of its midst a national form of beauty and strength, requiring still development. At the present time, Canada is in a stage of self-consciousness, a stage in which egotism may develop to its injury, or where it may be guided by sane thought into safe paths. Its greatest dangers are selfishness and waste, a selfishness which does not exist simply in the present disregard of the rights of others, but a disregard for the rights and interests of those who are to follow us, and for whom as well as for ourselves this heritage was given. The selfishness lies in a sacrificing of the future for the present. We are told that that which is seen is temporal but that which is not seen is eternal, and the Canadians of to-day are not simply to act for the present moment, but to build for the future; they are to conserve and save, not to exhaust or destroy any part of its heritage.

"Nature has been very prodigal in giving us such marvellous natural resources, the greatest of which is perhaps the fertility of our soil, for Canada is essentially an agricultural country, whatever else it may develop into. If from misuse and lack of care, the soil is exhausted, the country is going to suffer and future generations will condemn us. It is to consider the conservation of this soil and the present proper use of it that you are now assembled.

"Well might Canada as a whole, so abundantly supplied with all the provisions necessary to sustain the life of many millions in happiness and health, with bowed head and lifted heart ask the blessing, that our natural resources might be consecrated for our use, not to be abused, not to be dissipated, not to be wasted, and that the people of Canada so using them may be employed in the protection, the development and general service of our country. Why should it in any respect barter its future for its present wasteful enjoyment?"

Sir A. J. M. Aikins, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, in address of welcome at Conference on Soil Fibre and Soil Fertility of the Commission of Conservation at Winnipeg.